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From Our Special Correspondent.

confided to the stony embrace of Fort Lafayette, would be a mortifying incident in the life of a correspondent; and yet we live in awful apprehension of just that fate. If the War Department would only introduce a new extension to its functions (now that its hand is in) and supply the correspondence for all the Northern newspapers, there would be some hope for us. It is a plan that has served admirably in France, and the newspapers and the Government there thrive under it. They manage these things so well in France!

A week or more ago, a moderate military ferment was occasioned by the rumor of an immediate departure by Gen. McDowell upon a sanguinary tour. The duty of correspondents was plain. Information and passes were sought at the War-Office. I cheerfully bear testimony to the freedom with which applicants were suffered to wait unmolested at the outer door for several hours, and I record with gratitude that when they were finally sent away unsatisfied, they were permitted to go without the additional injury of personal violence. The student of the manners and customs of the Cannibal Islands

The two gentlemen of whom I speak (I trust the application of the word "gentlemen" to newspaper correspondents will not excite the disapprobation of the censor) rode tranquilly through the County of Fairfax, demanding some surprise by the readiness with which they paid for the food they consumed at various hotels, and experiencing a great deal in consequence of the discrepancy between prices and quality. "You come very late to the office, Sir," said his chief to Charles Lamb. "Yes, Sir," said Lamb, "but then I go away very early." So our recommendations we might have complained, but for the equally logical reflection that, if dear, they were certainly very bad. Centerville was taken with a loss of a considerable number of dollars, and the counterpoising was done after the account was rendered. Manassas was occupied with even more difficulty. An individual granted the approach with great determination, and informed us that he was a ring-tailed son of a scouter from Peru, adding that if we doubted he would kill us. Of course, it was impossible to doubt. Several other individuals immediately came up with the assertion that they, too, were ring-tailed sons of scouters from Peru, and invited us to make a close inspection of that curious animal, as we should probably never enjoy another equally advantageous opportunity. We discovered that the creature in question is profane of speech and odorous of whisky, and that he wears the uniform of the 4th Pennsylvania Regiment. A brief conversation with a first lieutenant near by revealed that he likewise, if not a ring-tailed son of a scouter from Peru, at least possessed the habits of that beast, so far as drunkenness and indecency went; and a rapid ride through the place betrayed that the entire garrison, with the exception of a few cavalry who came near being deposited by mutineers, were insanely and infamous drunk.

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I may remark that my observations were curious. It is the custom of that noble animal, the horse, when in the act of navigation, to drop his entire body below the surface of the water, leaving the tip of his nose alone exposed, to advertise his locality. With this peculiarity I was not before acquainted, but there are periods in life when we acquire much knowledge in singularly brief spaces of time. My immediate conviction was that the horse is not an aquatic animal. He reeled and he rolled. As he man, I deferentially followed him, and as he rolled, I became conscious of the vanity of stirrups. But the tide rose only to my throat, and there were a great many chances of life and the pursuit of happiness, under more favorable conditions. Life Pharoah, and we reckoned without our host, and had trusted too blindly to random assurances selfishly inspired. No horse or man could have crossed Broad Run at that night. Ours were carried ruthlessly down stream for a number of yards, every one of which appeared a mile, at the most moderate calculation. The first yard was one of violence, for the poor quadruped gave indications of a desire to battle with his destiny, and to rid himself of the load he bore, and which, under the unusual circumstances, occasioned him a natural inconvenience. The second yard was one of death, and the third one of resignation. The animal was suddenly patient, from which I judge that his reflections were of a more despairingly tranquil nature than his rider's. I think he contemplated suicide, until an accidental *foaling*, some two fathoms below the surface, stimulated him to a struggle for existence. At that moment an attentive eddy relieved me by an ingenious twist of gloves and pocket handkerchief which I had carried under my arm, and while I watched the heartless celerity with which they escaped, we regained the shore. How it was done I cannot distinctly say, but the credit of the achievement, I believe, was due wholly to the horse. I certainly have no part in it, and my respect for the animal as one of more than human sagacity swelled at once and enormously. It is needless to say that we did not cross, and it is my firm belief that, when we regained the semi-solid earth, the stream was sensibly diminished, such quantities of water did we two bear away in our respective boots and pockets. Rivulets ran from our hats, fingers, feet, and some of the features of our faces. Our weight was almost doubled by the water which had drenched us. Our personal effects were ruined; and I recall with some pecuniary regret that my boots ever stirred from their places until they were out of some time afterward. Each saddle-bag was a phenomenal aquarium, in which swam brushes, note-books, opera-glasses, and other odd fish. Bank-notes in pocket were pulpy, and my companion might have been sent all over the country by mail without charge, so liberally was he adorned with postage stamps which stuck to various parts of his frame. In an open house, or at an evening party, our appearance would have produced a sensation involving social distress and the police. And yet—I would not say it in a boastful spirit—we landed twice.

This army officer who act and live by rigid tactics should be indisposed to suffer intrusion from chance strangers, is probably natural. I should not wish to complain of their reluctance to offer general courtesies. But an unwillingness to yield shelter to two poor devils, shunted as we then were, seemed to me little short of barbarity. For a display of ungenerousness, I fix the invitation to enter the only available hut, and approach the only available fire in the neighborhood, as the most eminent in my menemy. But it was almost a question of life and death. The consequences of our aquatic enterprise might have been serious had we been deprived of the restorative of heat. So pride had to be set aside for awhile, and, indeed, after being keel-battered through oceans of insult at Washington, an extra plunge could only call for the exercise of a little more patient endurance. This is the curse of an army correspondent's calling—he must forever be liable to fall into positions of dependence, where money can avail nothing, and where he may be forced to choke down his self-respect and spirit to accommodate the discourtesy of every epaulette he meets. The physical hardships may be passed over with cheerfulness; the moral degradations are intolerable.

upon existence as a burden, sensible of partial mitigation. The prospect of getting away from that place was luxury enough. And yet, before we left it, we found how near we had been to courtesy and comfort without knowing it. An officer whom we casually met, understanding at a glance our mortifying position, strove with such kindness of manner and evident sympathy to alleviate our annoyances, that under his influence I really succeeded in imagining myself a man again, and not a slave. I cannot forbear to mention that Major Adams of the Lincoln Cavalry, a stranger, was the only person in all that camp who stirred a finger to relieve us from absolute humiliation, although we had not only acquaintances, but professed friends, in the very camp.

That day the stream was forded without much difficulty, and thenceforward our discomforts were only physical, and consequently not worthy of consideration. To be sure the drenched garments could not come off for three days, but that was very little, when the personal surroundings were agreeable. Better is a jacket all wet with pervading good nature around, than a new pair of dry pantaloons and hatred outside of them. We came under the protection of a General (and a gentleman) commanding a division, who having, I believe, once been engaged in journalism, knows that one does not cease to be a human being from the moment that he joins a newspaper—a knowledge limited, apparently, to very few. More acknowledgments are due to him, and the officers of his staff, than I know how to give—and perhaps he would be better pleased if I did not publicly give them. Two days with the advance convinced us that the face of the country had been so changed by the recent rains that no very immediate action was likely to be taken. And so, after a blustery week of ethereal experiences, Washington again received us, where your correspondent waits, at your service.

The Deserted Fortifications at Centreville
—Their formidable character—Reminiscences of July.

From Our Special Correspondent

CASEYVILLE April 6, 1902.

It is possible that the name of Centerville no longer possesses a very vivid interest. At no time has it been considered worthy of particular attention by the Northern people, and now that the scene of probable events is becoming more and more distant, it is likely to pass entirely from the public mind. Its best title to fame has hitherto been that it formed the base of our military operations on the day of our singular defeat last July, and that its abandonment was the signal of the greatest reverse that has befallen the Union cause during the war. Its local reputation has been wholly overshadowed by that of the Manassas Junction, near at hand. Manassas having been the point from which we were menaced before the Bull Run battle, and the center of the Rebel force on the occasion of their first and only victory, we have associated with it an importance which did not subsequently belong to it. It was impossible for two points, so close together, to receive an equal degree of popular respect, and Manassas having been the first to assert itself, it secured the preference for all time, in spite of whatever Centerville may have afterward done for its own distinction.

Visiting this place now for the first time since the untimely repulse nine months ago, I find so many important changes have come over it, so much has been effected toward rendering it a most imposing obstacle to our advance into Virginia, so great reliance has evidently been put upon it by the Rebel general, recently in power here, that it rises to dignity we had never vouchsafed it, and that it claims to a place in the history of this campaign in Virginia can hardly be slighted, notwithstanding that it was relinquished without a struggle, and that the unusual preparations made for its defense availed little to the purposes of the Southern generals. That a great test of their power had been anticipated here, I think no person can doubt who contemplates the vastness of the defenses they had established. It is true that these defenses bear no comparison to the more perfect works with which our own engineers have surrounded Washington, but, judged from the Rebel standard of excellence, they are the most elaborate and effective yet produced by them. Every previous fortification reared by the Southern troops had been so weak and worthless that no value could be placed upon them; but these, it seems, are of a character which would render them truly formidable, especially when the natural strength of the position is considered. I do not mean to say that a Rebel stand at Centerville never even have been considered an effective obstacle to our generals, since ordinary skill would have devised the means of its overthrow by the simplest and the surest strategic demonstration. It could have been assailed in flank with such advantages as to render all the defensive preparations unavailing. But it is nevertheless true that if it had ever been attacked by the course which our army pursued on the previous advance, it is doubtful whether any courage, endurance, or resolution could have wrested the position from those who occupied it.

There are many who remember the appearance of the place when the first Union army advanced upon it last July. From the low valley which lies beneath it a single broad-walk, narrow and limited in extent, was discerned stretching across the road which conducted to the heights. The exceeding strength of the situation was all that then caused our leaders to pause. The earthwork was unimportant. Its inadequacy was apparent at the first glance. But the position was formidable beyond any that had been encountered. For nearly a mile the land rose steadily and gradually, almost without a break to the summit of the hill upon which the village stands. There were few of the usual irregularities to furnish shelter to assaulting columns. The fields were open and generally unobstructed. A whole army might have been sacrificed in any attempt to carry that position, provided it had been amply defended. But the meagreness of the fortifications showed that no positive resistance would be offered, and our army pressed forward unopposed. So it was, nine months ago; but now, how different. In place of a single feeble breastwork, whole lines and chains of forts are seen, not only in immediate view at the front, but stretching far away on either side to distances greater than the eye can compass. Briefling forts, with embrasures through which the sunlight streams with a force glare that only hints of what might have poured therefrom, had too rash a venture been made against them. Long arrays of rifle pits, made formidable by their unity, and by the unbroken line which they establish between each redoubt. A mighty mass of intrenchments and field-works, but not without a plan.

It was late in the day when I reached Centreville, and the obscurity of the evening hid many of these fortifications as I rode through them to the village. Enough was evident, however, to manifest their abundant strength. I have said that they fall in comparison with the more ingenious works near Washington, but it should be understood that Washington enjoys no such topographical advantages as those which encompass Centreville. In the twilight the magnitude of these defenses seems in some respects augmented. The lines of rifle-pits appear to follow the shadows of the hills into interminable distances, and the scattered forts are multiplied by each mound which rises near them. To me, who have hitherto seen the most trivial expedients on the part of the Rebels, the quality of these works is

somewhat surprising. Examined in detail, they are full of technical imperfections. Criticism would crush them at a stroke. The ditches are narrow; the scarps are not abrupt; the parapets are ragged; the embrasures are irregular. The manner of their construction is truly Southern—that is to say, indolent, ungainly, careless, and awkward. Criticism, I suspect, could demolish them with a single thrust. Sairee would make quick work of them, and against deliberate sarcasm they would not stand a chance in detail. But as a whole, I dread to think of the possibilities of destruction they would have possessed against our best battalions. *Lazy* as their execution may have been, their conception and their plan were comprehensive and effective. They command the entire approach from the front, and to a certain, though far less perfect degree, they provide against movements from either flank. The hasty view of them proves their real character. The Rebels certainly trusted much to them; there is no reason why we should despise them.

For these reasons, if not for others also, I attach more importance to this little village than has usually been bestowed upon it. To me it presents peculiar claims, for the recollections of the scenes and event of last July are too painfully fastened in my memory to allow me to re-enter it without strange feelings. It is quieter now than when we first invaded it. Then we flooded it with noisy and jubilant throngs which had no thought but of triumphs already won and glorious victories yet to be as easily achieved. No Northern man could enter it with the same spirit now. The reverse which then destroyed our hope still holds its spell, although the days of our disaster are past. And, moreover, there is something infinitely sadder in the aspect of the place. It is a deserted village, though by no means "the loveliest of the plain." It is crowded with desolation. Tokens of departed multitudes are everywhere around. Here are the vacant dwelling-places of thousands and thousands of men. Suddenly as panic-stricken they have sped away, proving their weakness, but leaving the evidences of their numbers and their strength behind them. There are whole cities of huts and cots planted all about. The moonlight illuminates broad avenues and numberless little passages from ward to ward. Vast fields, late populous, now lie barren and abandoned. There is no attempt to ward off the dreary effects of the desertion. Carcasses of beasts strewn the plain, singly birds prey upon them. Dogs run through the vacant boyals and howl mournfully among the fresh grave-yards, as if seeking lost masters. It is melan choly enough wherever we turn, and the lights of the village are too weak and too few to dissipate the gloom.

But the villa itself revives reminiscences enough to occupy one's thoughts. Here, on one side is the stone Church where a hundred of our brave fellows wounded in the first day's fight, lay and suffered uncomplainingly, until we were forced to leave them. Here, on the other, is the little shanty whence the dvarish Israelite dispensed ink that would not flow pens without point, and wafers without a stick to recommend them. Here is a piazza, carefully constructed of the hardest wood Virginia grows, upon which I slept, with Brady and Wood, and other amateur warriors, the night before the battle, and was enabled, by virtue of fatigue, to dream of sweetest peace, in spite of want of ligneous sympathy. Here is the dwelling of Aunt Polly, formerly famous for her durability of Union sentiment, the tawny bloom of her complexion, and the luxuriant fragrance of her huckle-cake—and here is the mansion of her former master (who now repudiates the chattel title), Mr. Grigsby who having once vaunted the splendors of Secession now enjoys the opportunity of fully rejoicing out. He owned large estates in this and adjoining counties, which are rendered worthless by the trespass of marauding armies. He owned negroes, who shook of their allegiance long ago, and yet remain about him to boast their independence. He owned edifices in Alexandria, among them the famous "Marshall House," which now lie almost in ruins, and useless to his purposes hereafter.

The few remaining residents of the village preserve their old force feeling, and they are almost the only vestiges which retain the semblance of their former selves. The blacks are all as vociferous in Union demonstration as ever; the whites (those who happen to linger) are as vehement in Southern display. These latter are inflamed even beyond precedent by the delinquencies of their late slaves, who have quietly shaken off allegiance, and declined service of any sort except on adequate compensation. This uprooting of Virginia [at] special occasions and indignant discussion. "They say they are freemen," say young Mr. Griggby, "and I suppose they are; still the war's over; but if I come across any of them afterward, it won't be good for them. I'll teach them!"

Centreville stands isolated now from the course of public travel. The tide of curiosity tides toward Manassas—that of warfare to distances far beyond. But those who pause here find their interest acute; stimulated. It is a dreary enough village, to be sure, but it is something to see the monument of Johnston's and Stuart's and Smith's best skill. I will be long before the Centreville fortification comes to attract attention. They point a moral, too—that in this, as in other memorable cases, the Rebel leaders "have undertaken more than they could accomplish."

REMARKABLE MEDICAL CASE.—About two weeks ago we noticed an accident to a young lady, on the New-Haven Railroad, who was walking upon the track near Mount Vernon, Westchester County. Her attention was drawn to a train passing on the Harlem Road near her, and, not observing the one approaching, she was struck by the cow-catcher and thrown into the air, and fortunately off the track. She was picked up and carried to the village quite insensible, and apparently in a dying state. It was soon reported that she was dead; but, strange to say, she was the last person to be convinced to the contrary. From Dr. Edward Seguin, a French physician, of extensive practice both in France and this country who resides at Mount Vernon, we learn that he found Miss M. — C —, who met with this accident apparently not very seriously injured. But she was in a comatose condition, from which she never would have aroused without strong measures, which, as this case shows, should never be neglected. For several days all efforts to arouse her were unavailing; and, after she was able to take food and talk, it was at first impossible to persuade her that she was alive. She seemed to be impressed with the single idea possessing her mind at the moment the locomotive was approaching her—that is, that she should be killed. When earnestly asked to answer questions, her replies all indicated that she believed herself to have left the world; and when food or drink were given her, after taking them she immediately sank again into the comatose condition. By the most energetic treatment she was aroused sufficiently to make her feel that she was alive, and then she thought, if not dead, she certainly was in a dying state. In this condition she has continued until quite recently. She is now, however, apparently growing stronger in body and mind—so that the prospect of complete recovery is favorable. Medical men may recognize in the name of the physician in charge of this case the author of a work upon the treatment of idiocy. We understand that his treatment of the case has been in accordance with the principles adopted with persons whose minds are naturally weak.